DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 358 793 HE 026 524

AUTHOR Miller, Michael T.; Newman, Richard E.
TITLE Fund Raising for Athletic Programs: Considerations for Success.
PUB DATE [93]
NOTE 16p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Athletics; Donors; Educational Finance; Financial Exigency; *Fund Raising; Grantsmanship; Higher Education; Private Financial Support; *Program Development; Retrenchment
IDENTIFIERS *Athletic Administration; Athletic Departments

ABSTRACT

In light of the current period of higher education financial retrenchment, a model for athletic program fund raising is proposed. It is stressed that any program must respond to individual donor needs through open lines of communication that link the act of giving to some aspect, belief, or feeling of the donor. Fund raisers are seen as typically committed to either an institution as a whole or a spirit of philanthropy. Athletic directors preparing a fund raising program are urged to follow the following guidelines: (1) seek assistance and information from the institution's development office or foundation in the form of donor data, information data bases, software, and support services; (2) assess the culture and climate of and for giving; (3)identify principal volunteers and key staff members; (4) choose a structure that encourages regular contributions; (5) establish lines of communication which reach a broad spectrum of constituencies; and (6) establish follow-up procedures to all contributions. This model is specifically grounded in multi-dynamic communications which express the need for athletics to various groups and also concentrates on the transfer of relevant information used in decision making related to giving. (Contains 16 references.) (JB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED358793

Fund Raising for Athletic Programs: Considerations for Success

Dr. Michael T. Miller
Assistant Professor

Department of Vocational and Adult Education
University of Nebraska
530 East Nebraska Hall
Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0553

(402) 472-3337
FAX: (402) 472-5907

Mr. Richard E. Newman
Assistant Professor and Defensive Football Coordinator

Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation
University of Mary
7500 University Drive
Bismarck, North Dakota 58504

(800) 288-6279
FAX:(701) 255-7687

Running Head: Athletic Development

HE 026 524

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

MICHAEL T. MILLER

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

During the past decade, educational institutions of all scopes and missions have become aware of the necessity for alternative approaches to funding; especially in the athletic arena. Higher education alone raised over $9 billion in fiscal year 1990, and a host of other non-profit entities similarly reached record highs in raising money.

Educational institutions, however, face a more serious problem than their non-profit colleagues, that of fiscal retrenchment. Indeed, many institutions have embraced cut-back management strategies to address the difficult issue of fulfilling a growing number of constituent needs with fewer resources (McMillen, 1989). Often, the sacrifice has been athletic department support. Whether high schools, community and junior colleges, or four-year universities, the athletic department has been placed in peril by the desire for better fiscal control.

The result among many athletic administrators has been to accept fund raising programs as a component of everyday life. Coaches, boosters, athletic administrators, and alumni and development office personnel have all begun the arduous task of assembling donor networks; creating an infrastructure to facilitate the sustained acceptance and growth of financial contributions. In many respects, this "infrastructure" has been based on existing booster organization guidelines, yet, fail to address several of the fundamental components of a successful development program.

The purpose of this examination was to review current understandings of fund raising, and based on this research, offer a structure and strategy for creating and sustaining a successful athletic fund raising program.

Fund Raising Today

Acceptance of fund raising activities and responsibilities has grown increasingly common for personnel affiliated with educational institutions. While most higher education institutions have organized specific institutional advancement programs and personnel (Rowland, 1977), athletic fund raising, often termed "athletic development" to encompass a variety of phases and activities, is not typically a high priority.

Fund raising has been described as a growth industry, and in the process of achieving this title, has become increasingly systematic and scientific (Wood, 1989). Direct mail programs are targeted by income, neighborhood, gender, age, and even envelope colors are decided based on market research and the ability of a certain color to evoke a specific emotion.

As reliance and the perfecting of fund raising strategies have grown, athletic development programs have continued to be assigned as "other duties" or the activities of reluctant coaches and sports information personnel. The result has been an uneven playing field in favor of the numerous non-profit agencies competing for the same dollars as athletic programs. Within any given community, these competing non-profit agencies may include hospitals, churches and religious organizations, boys or girls

homes, public facilities, health care agencies such as clinics and hospitals, public school and higher education academic programs, charitable community trusts and foundations, public television and radio, and even nursing homes. Indeed, the challenge to athletic fund raising personnel is great.

Donors: Why do they give?

The underpinnings of an individuals decision to make a charitable contribution have been linked to a need for affiliation, feelings of responsibility, peer approval, and for ego gratification (Brakeley, 1980). Based on this philosophy, a number of researchers have attempted to link charitable giving to various experiences and characteristics unique to educational institution affiliation.

Giving to education has been linked to involvement with student organizations (Hammersmith, 1985; Haddad, 1986), attitudes about the institution (Chewning, 1984; Korvas, 1984), and participation in constituent society activities (Caruthers, 1971). Other investigations have sought to link giving to self esteem (Anderson, 1981), the condition of the economy (Leslie, Drachman, Conrad, & Ramey, 1983), and effectiveness of the personnel in the development office (Miller, 1991).

Suggested in all of these investigations is the need for a program which responds to individual needs through open lines of communication and links the act of giving to some aspect, belief, or feeling of an individual. Hedgepeth (1985) suggested that donors continue to give in order to feel a greater sense of

affiliation and achievement, and eventually, to achieve a feeling of empowerment.

The Fund Raisers

Fund raising professionals have been described in many lights, ranging from professional managers (Willard, 1984) to non-profit leaders committed primarily to the ideals of a "third sector" and the spirit of philanthropy (Brod, 1986). In general, these efforts have been made through personal experiences (Miller & Seagren, 1991), yet have no base for broad generalization.

The fund raising professional has been typically characterized as an individual able "to articulate institutional aims; an ability to work with volunteers; skill and trust in delegating authority; committed to institutional and non-profit ideals; office management skills; and satisfaction from 'the knowledge that their work benefits people served by the institution'" (Miller & Seagren, 1992, p. 4).

Through these characteristics of effective fund raising professionals, program success has been limited to the performance of the overall fund raising program. Authors (Ast, Moore, & Rook, 1986; Miller 1991) have noted that the personal commitment to the individual's job may well be the best predictor of fund raising program success.

Putting It Together

The observations presented on the state of fund raising, donor motivation, and fund raising personnel all provide a framework for considerations of inclusion to an effective and

comprehensive fund raising program. Prior to acceptance of any given model, however, the athletic officer personnel must address several basic questions on what they expect of the program (see Figure 1). The questions provided here provide an illustration of the types of issues which must be addressed: resources, commitment, and expectations.

Upon the determination of resources and expectations, initial contact with the institutions development office or foundation may prove helpful. The professional fund raisers should be able to provide basic information on legal and policy issues to be dealt with as the athletic fund raising program is conceptualized. Past capital campaign feasibility study reports may also prove to be helpful in understanding current, former, and future donor attitudes and beliefs. Additionally, the development officer should be in a position to provide information on past athletic fund raising efforts, and may even be able to provide names and software or start-up money for an athletic giving data base. The professional fund raisers may also be willing to assist in the creation of giving clubs and acknowledgement correspondence.

As the development office is approached for assistance and regulatory assurance, the athletic office must make an effort to assess the culture and climate of and for giving. Principal volunteers should be identified along with key staff members or coaches who will be involved in fund raising activities. While the literature on fund raising professionals was not definitive,

there was a correlation in need of attention: the fund raiser plays a key role in program success. The individual selected for fund raising activities should have firm belief in the advancement of athletics, but should be equally consistent "match" with the athletic program's culture.

Based upon the culture and assistance from the development office, the athletic development program must have structure which allows for regular contributions. The avenue for contributions will vary based upon the athletic program culture, but may consist of an annual special event, semi-annual fund appeals, an annual telephone campaign, etc. Once a basic structure of contribution opportunities is established, the athletic program personnel can concentrate on upgrading donors to different, higher levels. With a basic structure focused around regular giving opportunities, the strength and impact of contributions should be illustrated. Using examples of success, improvement, and growth as the result of private contributions, the entire program is strengthened and the "testimonials" add a persuasive dimension to the fund raising program.

The illustration of the power of giving can be easily facilitated if lines of communication are opened with a broad spectrum of constituencies. Specifically, donors and potential donors should be given the opportunity to view how the entire athletic program is faring, getting to know different coaches, and of course, being acknowledged for both their cash (and in-kind) and volunteer contributions. Occasional "town-meetings"

may also provide a valuable tool for improving relations with donors and others across the institution's campus.

Uniting communications and testimonials is a very real need for a coherent, independent data base of potential donors. The accurate maintenance of a data base will allow for simplified contact with donors and potential donors, and will also allow for a better manipulation of data.

The manipulation of data will allow the athletic department personnel the opportunity to check populations of donors and potential donors, and perhaps more importantly, allows for independent donor research outside of the context of the institutional development office. Caution must be taken, however, to assure compliance with institutional policies regarding fund raising activities. In many cases, the institution's development office will be agreeable to the establishment of an independent data base if information is shared in a manner which assures proper institutional recognition.

Perhaps the most important aspect of an independent athletic development program is the proper follow-up of contributions and subsequent stewardship. Once again, the culture of the athletic program must be considered, dictating which follow-up procedures are appropriate at different levels of giving. At the very least, receipts and acknowledgement letters for all gifts should be standard. Through the proper recognition of gifts, athletic program personnel are actually preparing to ask for future gifts,

a process often termed "stewardship." As in other components of this model, consultation with the institution's development office may prove beneficial.

Discussion

College athletics play a very real role in the entire climate and ecology of student and campus community life. In order to sustain this role, however, approaches to funding other than state allocations and student fees must be established. Many athletic programs have turned to fund raising for support.

The model for fund raising identified and outlined here was developed based on understandings of research and empirical experience. The model is specifically grounded in multi-dynamic communications. Multi-dynamic communications refers to the expression of need for athletics through and to a number of publics. The model detailed here builds on the multi-dynamic approach to communications and concentrates on the transfer of relevant information used in decision making related to giving.

Despite the comprehensiveness of any development plan of action, program success will be, dictated by implementation and follow through. Because of this, special attention within the framework of this model was placed on the coordination of stewardship activities. Indeed, the cultivation of donors is perhaps the most difficult and complex activity to be undertaken within the fund raising program. Cultivation activities must be strategically planned and coordinated in order to satisfy both the real and perceived needs of potential donors. From this

model and the background of research presented, the apparent success of development programs appears to lie in the simple communication of needs. Additional activities will only improve the actions which carry the message of the need. From this fundamental understanding athletic department personnel must make the professional and personal commitment to the work which predicates development program success.

References

Anderson, G. C. (1981). Self esteem and altruism as motivation factors for alumni giving, and their relationship to various donor characteristics. Doctoral dissertation, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI.

Ast, S. T., Moore, W. M., & Rook, A. (1986). Getting a line on this line of work. The NSFRE Journal, 6(2)

Brakeley, G. A. (1980). Tested ways in fund raising. NY: American Management Association.

Brod, I. (May 1986). Recruiting a fund raiser here are the qualities to look for. FRI Bulletin, 1-2.

Caruthers, F. A. (1971). A study of certain characteristics of alumni who provide financial support and alumni who provide no financial support for their alma mater. Doctoral dissertation, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK.

Chewning, P. B. (1984). The attitudes of alumni non-donors, donors, and consecutive donors toward Drake University. Doctoral dissertation, Drake University, Des Moines, IA.

Haddad, F. D. (1986). An analysis of the characteristics of alumni donors and non-donors to Butler University. Doctoral dissertation, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV.

Hammersmith, V. A. (1985). The development of a survey instrument to profile donors to athletics. Doctoral dissertation, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV.

Hedgepeth, R. C. (July, 1985). The role of volunteers in annual giving programs: Are they necessary? Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, Washington, DC.

Korvas, R. J. (1984). The relationship of selected alumni characteristics and attitudes to alumni financial support at private colleges. Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri at Kansas City.

Leslie, L. L., Drachman, S., Conrad, C., & Ramey, G. (1983). Factors accounting for variations over time in voluntary support for colleges and universities. Journal of Education Finance, 9, 213-225.

McMillen, L. (6 December 1989). Cornell faculty urges cuts in jobs so pay can go up. The Chronicle of Higher Education, 36(14), A 25-A26.

Miller, M. T. (1991). The personal motivation of chief academic development officers. Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Miller, M. T., & Seagren, A. T. (March 1991). Characteristics of planned giving officers: Practicing professionals perceptions. Resources in Education (ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education Reproduction Service Number ED 325 032).

Miller, M. T., & Seagren, A. T. (1992). Personal incentives as motivational sources for chief academic development officers. Department of Vocational and Adult Education, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

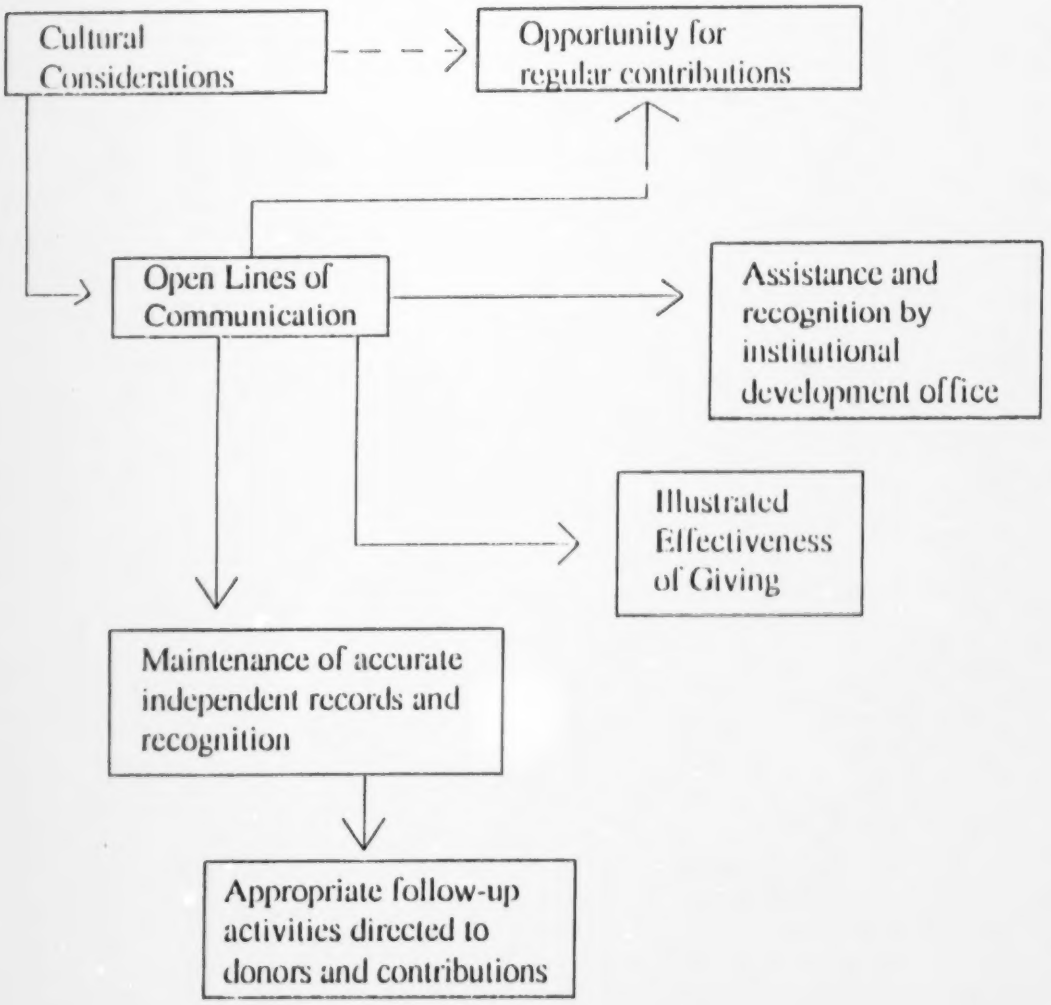
Wood, E. W. (1989). Philanthropy: Past, present and future. The Journal Contemporary issues in Fund Raising, 6-8.

Figure 1

General Questions to be Answered

1. What is the goal of the development program?
2. Who will be responsible for program success and who will participate?
3. How much can we spend to get the program "off the ground?"
4. What is the current climate for giving to the athletic program?
5. What constituencies do we have to draw upon?
6. What fund raising techniques will best suit our current state of affairs?
7. How will we evaluate our fund raising program?

Figure 2
Model for Athletic Development Programs


Cultural Considerations
Opportunity for regular contributions
Open Lines of Communication
Assistance and recognition by institutional development office
Illustrated Effectiveness of Giving
Maintenance of accurate independent records and recognition
Appropriate follow-up activities directed to donors and contributions